

## Technical note

# Use of a suction tube to prevent nasal pressure sores during nasotracheal intubation

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Nasotracheal intubation is commonly used in head and neck surgery. While the most common complication is epistaxis, alar pressure sores from the prolonged compression of the tube on the alar rim can cause considerable discomfort.<sup>1</sup> The risk increases with the duration of the anaesthesia, the patient being male, and other factors such as permissive hypotension during midface procedures.<sup>2</sup>

Various methods are used to prevent pressure sores, such as support arms for the tubes, hydrocolloid dressings,<sup>3</sup> and modified nasotracheal tubes.<sup>4</sup> The extra equipment involved may not always be available or affordable, but a simple and inexpensive technique involves the use of a Merocel nasal pack to act as a cushion between the tube and the ala.<sup>5</sup> This is a commonly used method, but the pack can slip out of position, particularly during longer procedures.

We describe a simple and inexpensive technique that has proved popular in our own department. A Yankauer sucker (currently £0.34, Pennine Healthcare) is wedged under the head end of the operating table cushion. The bifurcation of the anaesthetic tubing sits astride the Yankauer sucker and provides support for the tubing system, which releases the pressure on the nose (Fig. 1). The tube can be further secured to the Yankauer sucker with ties, and other equipment, such as temperature probes, can also be attached for extra support. This method does not obstruct the surgical team nor does it get disrupted, even during long operations.

This is a cheap and simple method to prevent nasal pressure sores during nasotracheal intubation and, in our experience, has been well accepted by both anaesthetic and surgical teams.

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Fig. 1. Yankauer sucker tube wedged between the cushions of the operating table to take the weight of the tubing system.

**Ethics statement/confirmation of patients' permission**

Not applicable.

**Conflict of interest**

We have no conflicts of interest.

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